

**People's Democratic Republic of Algeria**  
**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
**University of Ammar Telidji – Laghouat**  
**Faculty of Letters and Languages**  
**Department of English**



**The Representation of Post-  
colonial Nigeria through  
Habila's *My Uncle Ezekiel's*  
Protagonist: A  
Psychoanalytical Study**

**A Dissertation in African Literature**  
**Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements**  
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**Written by Boukhalkhal Yasmine**  
**Supervised by Mrs Selt Affaf Djihad**

**Examiner: Mrs Bentaher**

**Chairman: Mrs Boumous**

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I dedicate this work to anyone has pulled an oar for me to reach this level of education. I shall pay tribute to those who did not procrastinate to charge me with emotional as well as educational support.

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## Abstract

Ezekiel, in Helon Habila's short story *My Uncle Ezekiel*, projects Nigeria's colonial aftermath through his psychology. In fact, Frantz Fanon is a leading figure in analyzing the psychology of the colonial discourse which, in the context of the story, reflects the situation of post-colonial Nigeria. The author describes Ezekiel when he is young as being full of promise, just like Nigeria's age of prosperity under the British colonialism. Prior to that, Britain sent Christian missionaries promising locals to bring them civilization. In the context of the story, Ezekiel, who was full of promise, reaches a regrettable stage because of drinking. Nevertheless, what kills him in the end is the cold. Thus, the impact of the drink and cold on Ezekiel simulates, respectively, the impact of religion and colonialism on Nigeria and Nigerians. As a result, the Fanonian study aims at scrutinizing the impact of the drink on the psychology of Ezekiel, which can be narrowed down into three concepts, alienation, ambivalence and assimilation. Accordingly, the study is made to be able to figure out the impact of religion as well as the British colonialism on Nigeria and Nigerians.

**Keywords:** Nigeria, Colonialism, Post-colonialism, religion, Drink, Frantz Fanon, alienation, ambivalence, assimilation.

## ملخص

حزقيال من خلال سيكولوجيته في القصة القصيرة عمي حزقيال للكاتب هيلن هابيلا يعكس الحالة التي آلت إليها نيجيريا بعد الاحتلال البريطاني. في الحقيقة فرانس فانون يعتبر من الشخصيات الرائدة في مجال تحليل سيكولوجيا الاحتلال التي تمثل في سياق القصة حالة نيجيريا ما بعد الاحتلال. يصف الكاتب حزقيال وهو صغير بالفتى الذي يتوعدده مستقبل ملؤه الأمل تماما مثل عهد الازدهار ايام الاحتلال البريطاني. قبل هذا أرسلت بريطانيا مبشرين مسيحين لكي يعدوا السكان المحليين بأنهم سي جلبون الحضارة لهم. في سياق القصة مجددا، حزقيال الذي كان يملؤه الأمل تتدهور حالته بسبب المشروب رغم ذلك فان السبب في الأخير وراء مقتله هو البرد. إذا أثر المشروب والبرد على حزقيال يحاكي على التوالي أثر الدين والاحتلال على نيجيريا والنيجيريين. ومنه فإن تحليل فانون يهدف إلى دراسة تأثير المشروب على نفسية حزقيال والتي يمكن إختزالها الى ثلاث عوامل: العزلة، الازدواجية والاستيعاب. مما سبق ذكره فإن الدراسة تهدف إلى تحديد أثر الدين والاحتلال على نيجيريا والنيجيريين.

**الكلمات الدالة:** نيجيريا، الاحتلال، عصر ما بعد الاحتلال، الدين، المشروب، فرانس فانون، العزلة، الازدواجية، الاستيعاب.

## Résumé

Ezekiel, dans la nouvelle de Helon Habila, *Mon Oncle Ezekiel*, montre la période qui suit le colonialisme en Nigeria via son psychologie. En fait, Frantz Fanon est une figure principale qui a étudié la psychologie du discours colonial par lequel la situation du post-colonial Nigeria est représentée dans la nouvelle. L'auteur décrit Ezekiel, quand il est jeune, d'être plein de promesses juste comme la période de la prospérité en Nigeria sous le colonialisme Britannique. Avant cela, Grande-Bretagne a envoyé des missionnaires chrétiens pour promettre les locaux d'une civilisation. Toutefois, Ezekiel qu'était plein de promesses, il arrive à une étape regrettable à cause de l'alcool. Cependant, à la fin c'est le froid qui l'a tué. Donc, l'impact de l'alcool et de colonialisme sur Ezekiel, simule l'impact de religion et colonialisme sur Nigeria et les Nigériens. Par conséquent, l'analyse de Fanon vise à scruter l'impact de l'alcool sur la psychologie d'Ezekiel qui peut être rétréci sur trois facteurs : aliénation, ambivalence et assimilation. En conséquence, cette recherche est créée pour être capable à comprendre l'impact de religion aussi bien que le colonialisme Britannique sur Nigeria.

**Mots clés:** Nigeria, Colonialisme, Post-colonialisme, religion, alcool, Frantz Fanon, aliénation, ambivalence, assimilation.

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# General Introduction

Nigeria has suffered a great deal of psychological abuse due to the British colonialism. The psychological problems have been the result of the contact between the white and black cultures besides the colonial violence. In reality, the Fanonian approach to the colonial discourse explains the psychological phenomena caused by colonialism. In the same vein, Frantz Fanon believes that the source of psychological disorders is not only the introduction of a white culture but also forcing blacks to assimilate to that culture. As a result, his analysis determines three substantial symptoms of psychological pathology among blacks which are: alienation, ambivalence and assimilation. In fact, Fanon's psychoanalysis has emerged out of the Freudian psychoanalysis. Moreover, there is a strong relationship between the structure of the self<sup>1</sup> as defined by Freud and the three main disorders proposed by Fanon.

One of the characteristics of the postcolonial literature is the psychological reflection of the ex-colonized societies just like what happened in Nigeria. Moreover, there are a myriad of theories that attempt at analyzing the state of mind of those people who lived under oppression. However, Frantz Fanon's leading theories were so much prominent that many specialists analyzed his theory from different perspectives. For example, in the context of Marxism, Renate Zahar, in her book *Frantz Fanon: Colonialism and alienation*, argues that for Fanon, alienation is not solely caused by the effects of the social classes divisions yet also by race. In addition, Jock McCulloch<sup>2</sup>, by applying the theory of trauma, explains how black people develop a sense of ambivalence according to Fanon's point of view. In his book *Black Soul White Artifact*, he clarifies that trauma is exemplified in the clash between the values of the family and that of the colonizer when the black child comes into contact with whites, he illustrates, "*The black child is traumatised by the clash between the values and self-*

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<sup>1</sup> Freud claims that the self consists of three institutions that he calls: the id, the ego and the superego. It is explained in his book *The Ego and the ID*.

<sup>2</sup> Jock McCulloch is Associate Professor in the Department of Social Science and Planning at RMIT University in Australia. He died on January 18, 2018.

*perceptions transmitted to him by his family and the negation of those values once he comes into direct contact with European culture*” (68). Thus, the child starts to be ambivalent towards his/her black culture. Ambivalence, as a matter of fact, drives the colonized to assimilate the culture of the colonizer as put into words by Fanon. Hussein Abdilahi Bulhan, by analysing the theory of Fanon, reveals in the book, *Frantz Fanon and the Psychology of the Oppressed*, that through Fanon’s own experience besides the Negritude movement, he learned about assimilation and that “*the trunk may be painted white, but the roots will remain black*” (30). Unlike what has been said, few have related Fanon’s perspective on alienation, ambivalence and assimilation to Freud’s model of the self which consists of the id, ego and the superego.

There are plenty of postcolonial works which include themes of alienation, ambivalence and assimilation. However, Helon Habila’s master piece, *My Uncle Ezekiel* which was written in 2005, gives a brief yet enriched illustration to Fanon’s theory by means of symbolism. Habila expresses the damage done to Nigeria through the protagonist Ezekiel. Ezekiel is an ordinary man who witnesses two remarkable periods in Nigeria’s history. During the first period after independence in the 1970s, he enjoys the economic prosperity attained from oil exports. The narrator says that Ezekiel studies law at university, drives a Volkswagen car and drinks. Unfortunately, he fails his law exam, yet he works as a registrar in a magistrate court in Bauchi. He gets married to a school teacher whom his family calls Blacky. Ezekiel experienced a lot of misfortune which reflects the time of economic crisis in Nigeria’s history. He loses his job and his car in an accident. Moreover, he fails to control a fight between his wife and his daughter from an unknown mother. During those times, the cure to his doom is the drink. Since he did not have money to buy a drink, he starts selling his furniture then looting his parents’ house. However, after their death, he promised his sisters not to drink again. One day in a Christmas night he was seduced by a bottle of drink which he

thinks that it is the one and only dose that he takes. Regrettably, he enters any party falls in his sight while he is going home. In the end, he does not make it home and a woman finds him dead holding a bottle of drink written on it Christian Brothers. The narrator, however, clarifies that the cold and not the drink that killed him. The struggle of Ezekiel, in fact, is the impact and the struggle of any Nigerian lived in the post-colonial period.

The present paper endeavours to make readers familiar with Fanon's concepts of alienation, ambivalence and assimilation and easily pair them to Freud's structure of the self model. Furthermore, the core of this research paper is to disclose Fanon's concepts in the short story *My Uncle Ezekiel* and to psychoanalyse Ezekiel in order to understand how the protagonist reflects the devolution of Nigeria during the post-colonial era. Thus, the most convenient hypothesis suggests that the different periods of ups and downs that the psychology of Ezekiel experiences, which in the end marks its complete destruction, symbolizes and reflects Nigeria's times of prosperity followed by inescapable crises. The hypothesis, actually, paves the way to ask different questions which must be the guidelines of the current study. What forced Nigerians to alienate themselves from their culture, to be ambivalent towards it and to assimilate to another culture? What are the situations which indicate Fanon's concepts in *My Uncle Ezekiel*? In the end, what are the possible effects of the psychological change on the post-colonial era? The nature of this research paper requires a post-colonial psychoanalytical approach.

To easily follow the track of the study, the research paper is divided into three chapters. The first chapter will serve as a historical background of the colonial as well as the post-colonial Nigeria. It will expose the different changes in Nigeria's history from significant periods of growth, whether under the British colonialism or as an independent state, followed by periods of serious crises. The second chapter will first familiarize the reader with Freud's

psychoanalysis then it will explain the theory of Fanon and links it to the Freudian psychoanalysis. The results will be summarized and illustrated by means of diagrams. The third chapter, which is the essence of the study, will apply the Fanonian psychoanalysis on the psychology of Ezekiel which is exposed to special circumstances presented in the first chapter. The analysis will reveal the true causes behind Ezekiel's psychological deterioration. As a result, it will consult the reasons that led Nigeria to be a failing state during the post-colonial period.

# Chapter I

## Historical Context of Post-colonial Nigeria

Nigeria has experienced different phases of ups and downs throughout its history. That is due to the changing policies of its economic and political orders. For example, from the fifteenth up to the seventeenth century, the city of Lagos proved to be one of the powerful African centers in matters of slave trading. During those times, the powerful African chiefs seized feeble tribes and vended them to slave merchants. Afterwards, Britain brought about a new economic approach. In fact, the approach's damage was far more profound than the damage of slave trading. At the beginning, Africans were not fully aware of Britain's plans that marked the departure of a long period of a system of exploitation which its outcomes, hitherto, still affect the country and will still be affecting it for the next millennium according to Toyin Falola<sup>3</sup> prophecy. Unfortunately, when Africans started to be conscious of the British bad intentions, it was just too late. Therefore, the two remarkable periods that have shaped the contemporary Nigeria were: the colonial and the post-colonial era. Thereby, in this chapter, I will highlight those two phases which are characterized by moments of high stability followed by a massive collapse of economic, political and social systems.

## **1. Nigeria as a Colony**

Nigeria before colonialism was consisted of two different systems of governing: one in the north under the control of the Islamic empire, and the other in the south which was no more than a tribunal system. After following a well delicate plan, Britain unified the northern and southern parts under one government in 1940.

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<sup>3</sup> Toyin Omoyeni Falola is a Nigerian historian and professor of African Studies.

## 1.1. Britain's Brainstorming and Policies before Colonization

The eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century were times of high internal and external instability for West African regions. During that time, competition over slave trade and state extension marked the essence of the era's rockiness. In fact, there were different local companies that based their economy on slave trade with Europeans. It turned out that the commercial competition had two major results. First of all, the occurred rivalry generated a need for armament and warriors. Therefore, competitors did not only benefit from canoes, weapons and people in matters of war, but also they invested in them. Second, since competition provoked each company to try to control slave trade to maximize its benefits (Falola and Heaton 54). As a result, some monopolies occurred which led to a war outbreak and therefore, to an economic, political and social instability. At the heart of the crisis, Britain seemed as the only savior for its human-based policies.

Britain did not have an interest over Nigeria out of nowhere. For it first sent agents to reconnoiter the area, and to define its weaknesses and strengths, so that Britain would be able to set effective and unmistakable plans before colonizing the region. For example: in 1795, the Scottish explorer, Mungo Parko, was the one who found the Niger River and the fertile soil surrounding it before any European country.

By the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution suggested a new economic system away from human commodities. Accordingly, the concept of "*legitimate commerce*"<sup>4</sup> (Falola and Heaton 272) took place to serve Britain's interests. As a matter of fact, the black history of slavery helped Britain to present its alternative economic system easily and to gain the

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<sup>4</sup> Legitimate commerce is one of slave trade abolitionists' propaganda to set a new economic system match with the industrial revolution other than trading with human beings illegally.

public support of Africans. Thereafter, they used religion as a tool to have an indirect influence<sup>5</sup> over the region. So, Christian missionaries started to call for human rights concerning slavery under the slogan “*the Bible and the plough*” (Fagbemi 197). Moreover, they have claimed that they would bring civilization to blacks and push them to be governed by a civilized authority as well.

At the beginning, there were some quarrels over the abolishment of slavery because the economy of the region was based on slave trade. Accordingly, Britain was more drawn in internal politics, the thing that served its colonial future in the area later. It, actually, encouraged local leaders who opposed slavery against the reluctant ones by making treaties with them. Thereafter, if any of the terms of the agreement were bypassed, Britain considered that as an adequate reason to interfere in local’s internal politics or even to annex the region. However, when a recession took place due to the industrial revolution, local leaders started to be submissive to Britain and started to think of adopting the palm-oil trade as an economic alternative.

It was only after the establishment of a crown colony<sup>6</sup> in Lagos in 1861 that Britain started to have an influence over nowadays Nigeria. In the same vein, the effective Christian missions gained the public support of locals which made it easier for Britain to have a protectorate there. Actually, Britain, at those times, preferred the indirect rule by getting on domestic leaders’ good side.

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<sup>5</sup> Indirect rule is having an influence on the area’s political and economic systems from afar without using violence, for example: using treaties with local leaders or establishing companies.

<sup>6</sup> A Crown Colony is a British colony under the control of the British Crown. It is consisted of an administration and legislature represented by a governor.

The Berlin conference forced Britain to have a direct rule over the region. The change in policy, obviously, brought about new strategies. That is to say, violence was a must to protect Britain's economic interests. Thereafter, a series of wars and pacifications followed to establish the official borders and to bring together what is known currently as Nigeria. In fact, it was F.D Lugard, as a colonial administrator, who banded together the area under the Crown Colony of Nigeria. Moreover, there was a domestic administrative division which split the colony into three different regions: Northern, Western and Eastern appointing Lagos as its official capital.

## **1.2. Nigeria's Economy under the British Rule**

The economy of Nigeria took two different directions according to Britain's interests. During the period of indirect rule, economic affairs were in the hands of private institutions which made treaties with Europeans. Moreover, traders as well as farmers invested in palm trees in every possible way. After the abolishment of slave trade and the wars of monopolization which took place at that time besides the influence of the Berlin Conference<sup>7</sup>, an effective presence of Britain in the area was a must to save its interests.

By the late of the nineteenth century and during the British colonization, Nigeria was turned into a quite urbanized country which was mainly encouraged by seeking jobs and the building of a railway. The railway did not only serve in transporting marchadise, but also people who migrated from the countryside to the city. The new economic system, in fact, provided plenty of job opportunities unlike slave trade. Therefore, Nigerians started to

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<sup>7</sup> The Berlin Conference is a congress held in German in 1884-1885 to divide Africa between the world's greatest powers.

migrate from the misery of rural areas to the city where they started to be familiar with a new kind of payment which was wage earning (Falola and Salm 115).

When the Second World War was over, the Nigerian government decided to set up a development plan<sup>8</sup>, known as the Ten-Year Plan, which proved to be successful to a certain extent. The plan redirected the economic system of Nigeria as a kind of reform. As a result, it was petroleum that balanced payment at that time (Idachaba 40). Moreover, the plan, unlike previous constructive attempts, focused more on promoting social services. In addition, there was a special focus on building a good understructure. Furthermore, during that same period, the overall domestic investment in matters of schooling, roads, plants...etc augmented from 7 per cent to 15 per cent per (Ekundare 388). In fact, the Ten-year plan did not completely protect Nigeria from moments of economic crises.

The prosperity under the British rule, in fact, was not saved from moments of economic crises. It is worth noting, in the beginning, that the economy of Nigeria, at that time, was under a constant threat. The threat derived from the fact that Nigeria was exporting raw materials then purchasing finished goods. Thus, whenever the prices of raw materials fell, the economy of the country would be unbalanced. The first crisis took place after the First World War during the great depression of 1929<sup>9</sup>. In addition, there were some problems and riots occurred because of unbearable and sometimes irrational taxation.

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<sup>8</sup> Development plan, in the United Kingdom, is a plan supplied by a document that explains the authority's policies to be set to more develop towns and to improve living conditions.

<sup>9</sup> The Great Depression is an international economic crisis which touched the industrialized world. It lasted from 1929 to 1939.

### 1.3. Society and Culture

Society and culture changed dramatically during the British colonization. Before colonialism, Nigeria had a special way of living especially in the south. In the north, people lived under the Islamic administration which established a stabilized society with a centralized government. However, in the south, people lived under a system of clans. Under the British rule, the two regions were united under a single regime which was the beginning of forming a new identity to southerners and northerners known as Nigerians<sup>10</sup>. In addition, the economic system influenced the surface of the society in matters of social classes. Furthermore, establishing the borders of Nigeria was random that it did not include most of the people who lived under the same clan which caused serious problems of identity crisis (Aderinto 153). In addition, even in Nigeria the federal division<sup>11</sup> was uneven, for example: the northern part was larger than the other two parts. Accordingly, fights took place in matters of Parliament representation during the revolution.

It is true that the colonizer promoted education. Nevertheless, applying a western mode of life on Africans had its bad psychological impact on children. The good news is that, at the beginning, there were only primary schools that taught the reading and writing skills which was the turning point upon which the African literature changed from oral tradition to written materials. Later on, by 1926 eighteen secondary schools were established, and graduated students were sent either to Sierra Leone or to British universities to complete their studies (Falola and Heaton 127). In fact, the receiving of a Western education affected the natives' personality. Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton state that: "*European education*

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<sup>10</sup> The word Nigeria was inspired by the Niger River which runs through the region.

<sup>11</sup> Federal division is dividing Nigeria into areas in order to divide power between the national and local governments.

*did have an effect on the behaviors and beliefs of the Nigerians who received it, molding them over the decades into what has been called an African middle class – African in heritage, but with many European tastes and values” (128). The bad news is that Britain used education to better manipulate the Nigerian population by brainwashing children the thing which did not last for a long time.*

#### **1.4. Nationalism and the Road to Independence**

The resistance in Nigeria took different shapes according to time and nationalists’ own experiences. Likely, there were three noteworthy movements. The first one was represented by the armed resistance<sup>12</sup> which was not that lucky in having good outcomes (Falola, *The History of Nigeria* 62). Moreover, armed fighters were more likely patriots or fighters in the name of the clan because their resistance has started before the birth of the nation state. Nationalists, in contrast, had the ambition of liberating the whole country, and not to only fight for a small group unlike the armed resistance. Actually, there were nationalists who received a Western education and who were with the idea of walking hand in hand with Britain towards independence. The other group was represented by nationalists who from the beginning refused to ever accept the British interference in the area.

The first group of nationalists stressed on education as a key to have self-governance. Because of the western education they received, they both took benefits of the civilizing missions and cherished the local heritage that they were proud of. Dr. James Africanus Horton was a good representative of that group. Horton studied medicine at Edinburgh University and worked as a staff-assistant surgeon in the British army. After his military service, he started to

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<sup>12</sup> Armed Resistance is a primary resistance used by small numbers of locals.

be interested in matters of politics. In 1868, he thought that his dreams to liberate Nigeria became true thanks to the Fante people who started to reject the British authorities. The chief leaders formed the Fante Confederation<sup>13</sup> and Horton participated in it by writing a constitution and other political letters and he sent them to the British authorities, so that the confederation would be recognized (Shillington 651). Unfortunately, the British refused his petition and the group dissolved because of quarrels. The point that is to make about that group of nationalists is that, in times when they were convinced by the temporary interference of Britain in the region, they came to the conclusion that Great Britain was untrustworthy.

The second group of nationalists knew from the beginning the bad intentions of Britain. That is due to their bad experiences when they had been in contact with whites, elsewhere, other than Africa. For example, Edward Wilmot Blyden was born in the West Indies where he witnessed the horrors of servitude of the white men. His famous motto was “*Africa for the Africans*” (qtd. in Jestice 130) and he tried to show Africans the true motives behind the British presence in the area. He states: “...*Divines and politicians, physiologists and scientists, exhausted the resources of their intellect in the endeavour to prove the Negro only quasi-human—an excellent animal, but only an animal—born to serve a superior race*” (7). This kind of nationalists wanted to raise a pan-African awareness against the colonizer.

It was not until the global depression of 1929, caused by the First World War, that serious resisting movements started to take place in the region. Nevertheless, the objectives of the resistance took different ways. At the beginning, nationalists who did not oppose the civilizing missions were only asking for the improvement of the economic and social conditions. However, later on, when they developed a kind of consciousness concerning the

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<sup>13</sup> The Fanti Confederation is a political document to prove to Britain that the Fanti people could govern themselves.

true motive behind Britain's presence in Nigeria, they started to think of having their own self-governance. Nationalists from the first group used different tools like newspapers to raise awareness.

As it is already mentioned, the depression did, sorely, affect the economic and therefore the social conditions of Nigeria at that time. The most prominent resistance was Women's War<sup>14</sup>. In the following years, the period after the Second World War, witnessed bad social and economic conditions even worse than the one that took place during the global depression period. Consequently, a General Strike<sup>15</sup> was held by workers in 1945. The strike pressed hard on Great Britain to make serious economic changes. As a result, the British authorities suggested a Ten Year Plan. As mentioned erstwhile, the plan was devoted for establishing better infrastructures, providing materials to facilitate the process of education, and for the first time, improving social services. Up until that time, Nigerians were only asking for a reform within the colonial system not for independence.

Nationalists had supported pan-Africanism or armed resistance, before, 1914 which concerned only small areas. However, Africans who were born in that region after 1914 were dubbed Nigerians. Thereby, the new generation of nationalists, in the 1930s and after, had the Nigerian sense of nationalism. Moreover, they felt that colonialism formed a serious threat to the local culture.

The forthcoming constitutional reforms led Nigeria step-by-step towards self-governance. Earnestly, the regional houses of assembly followed by the Clifford

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<sup>14</sup> Women's War, or the Aba Riots is a campaign led by Igbo women to ask for their rights and to eliminate taxes.

<sup>15</sup> The General strike in Nigeria is a strike led by civil service workers when their salaries did not match with the cost of living due to the Global Depression.

Constitution<sup>16</sup> divided Nigeria into three regions according to ethnicity. Irritated by the situation, nationalists called for an important step which was involving them in writing the constitution because they were more knowing of what would suit them better than foreigners. Accordingly, the Macpherson Constitution came to fulfill the demands of nationalists and to Nigerianize civil services. As a matter of fact, the Macpherson Constitution established a central legislative council followed by House of Representatives. The final reformation that nearly granted independence to Nigeria was the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954. While most of the political parties manifested their readiness to have self-governance, the Northern regions were hesitant to obtain a full self-governance. As a result, the Lyttleton Constitution declared that Nigeria is consisted of three regions Western, Eastern and Northern. Therefore, the regions which wanted self-governance took their autonomy in 1956. However, the Northern part followed in 1959.

When each region took its self governance, all that remained was declaring Nigeria as an independent country. Finally, in 1<sup>st</sup> October 1960, Nigeria obtained its independence. Even if there were quarrels whether decolonization was a part of Europeans' plans or Nigerians took independence by themselves. However, what is more important is the post-colonial period.

## **2. Post-colonial Nigeria**

Due to the high influence of colonialism, the period which follows it is named post-colonialism to highlight the strong link between the two periods. Nigeria was not an exception

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<sup>16</sup> The Clifford Constitution of 1922 set up a new legislative council which allowed only southerners to form political parties according to their regions.

for the impact of colonialism can be easily inspected in all of its sectors being it political, economic or social.

## **2.1. Economic and political post-colonial Nigeria**

Researchers consider Nigeria as a failing state which is a modern concept. The causes of its failure, actually, refer to two factors as Paul D. William conceptualizes them as “*failure to control and failure to promote*” (qtd. in Hill 10). The failure to control is the result of the lack of states “*to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and appropriate or use ... [them] in determined ways*” (qtd. in Hill 10). Whereas, the failure to promote occurs when the government shows irresponsibility towards its citizens in matters of life necessities like safety and nurturing. The Nigerian government did not respect the precedent two factors. The government could not penetrate society because of regional quarrels nor could it control resources due to its dependence on Britain. Moreover, it failed to promote because it could not invest in the available resources, and it could not provide safety to citizens nor prevent the occurrence of a civil war. The economic system started seriously to be labelled and recognized as a failure in the 80s and the 90s.

The economic stability must be the product of political stability which plans for insightful and long lasting economic system. Unfortunately, nationalist leaders proved to be effectively fruitless in those matters because of ethnic-based quarrels and greed. In reality, the possibility of negotiations to have a united nation was hard to obtain. At those times emerged the “*national question*” (Falola and Heaton 158). That is to say addressing questions like “*what is it like to be a Nigerian?*” (Falola and Heaton 158). That was, possibly, due to the different ethnicities dominated in each region in Nigeria. As a result, there were rivals among

political parties because there was a fear if one region would be dominated by the other. That prevailing moral-sick belief as well as mismanagement affected the economy in all of its three sectors.

The dispute between the political leaders reached its pick between 1964 and 1970 when a military coup and a civil war took place. First of all, the federal election of 1964-1965 was excellently characterized by fraud and deception. Each political party implemented maximum tricks to gain elections. As a result, it was argued among Nigerians and to a large extent accepted that the interference of the military service was a must. That, actually, led to a change in the domestic government from a civil to a military regime in January 1966 (Falola and Heaton 159). That shift of power, in fact, did not end the problem as a civil war occurred in 1967. In fact, the catastrophic mistake that the military rulers committed was keeping easterners away from power. The eastern part included the most petroleum rich region in Nigeria. Consequently, easterners feared that the government would grab on their oil and then distribute wealth on other regions since the government was dominated by western as well as northern leaders. The fear of government's injustice pushed easterners to secede from the central government as the state of Biafra wanted to be separated from Nigeria.

The conflict, regrettably, caused a petroleum production deficiency which harmed the economy of the country at that time. The war, in fact, led foreign companies to question with whom they had to side to secure their future in the country. The war did not only mark an economic decrease but also human casualties for there were approximately 300,000 losses<sup>17</sup>. The war came to an end by the victory of the Nigerian state which re-annexed the eastern area

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<sup>17</sup> Usa Ibp Usa, *Nigeria Oil and Gas Exploration Laws and Regulation Handbook* (Washington: Int'l Business Publications, 2014) 69.

in 1970. Thereafter, the eastern region was divided into two states to prevent any future attempts to ask for independence. Moreover, it was treated as a colony more than a part of an independent state. In reality, from that time no leader from the eastern part was appointed as a head of the state.

Even if in the middle of the 1960s century there was a shortage in economy. However, early during that century a boost in the economic sector appeared due to the discovery of petroleum around the Niger delta region in 1958. In the normal and logical way of building a nation, internal and external policies dictate the strategies that must be followed to invest in local resources effectively. However, being dependent on overseas nations, the opposite would always happen. That dependence, indeed, never brought about long term political and social stability because it was always threatened by the world's economic fluctuations. In a related move, Nigeria seemed to be a scope of interest for Europeans again. So the investment in the oil industry brought its huge benefits to Nigeria in matters of political and social stabilities, especially, in the years following the end of the civil war. However, corruption along with ethnic tensions dominated that era.

The 1970s was an era of consumerism for Nigerians. It was a time of economic relief due to the quantity of oil exported, Daniel E. Harmon acknowledges, "By 1980 Nigeria was pumping some 2 million gallons of oil daily. Along with Libya and Algeria to the north, it had become one of the world's leading oil suppliers" (107). That age of consumerism did not corrupt the society only. However, even the government was sunk by greed and corruption.

The government and specialists, while they were enjoying the flavor of the temporal resources, they forgot about agriculture. Farmers focused, in a lesser degree than before, on

producing and exporting coffee and cocoa. Those products, actually, did not make food self-sufficiency attainable. Instead, they relied on importing vegetables and other necessary food that led to a massive foreign debt by the 1980s which was hard to overcome (Marmon 108). So, the mismanagement of wealth and the short-term political and strategic policies led the government as well as specialists to neglect improving other sectors like agriculture. Plainly, after the oil boom there followed a period of dropped petroleum prices in the 1980s and 1990s which caused crises and severe social and economic situations.

## **2.2. Post-colonial Social Nigeria**

The impact of the Richards Constitution of 1946, which was enacted under the British colonial policy of divide and rule, was still taking place during the post-colonial era. As a result, the structure of the society was weak and vulnerable to any external influence. Moreover, the fight between Nigerians was not based only on ethnicity. However, it took different cultural dimensions. During colonization, the focus of the Christian Missionaries was the South. Consequently, Britain left Nigeria dominated by two major religions<sup>18</sup> which were the source of conflict in many occasions. The struggle affected also the Nigerian class formation.

In its normal course, the system of production<sup>19</sup> determines social classification. However, in Nigeria, social mobility<sup>20</sup> is ethnocentric. So, class consciousness is narrowed down into ethnic groups. For the solution, Badru calls for fostering national identity (149). As

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<sup>18</sup> Christianity and Islam.

<sup>19</sup> Production System is the ideology or the range of methods used to produce and consume goods like Marxism.

<sup>20</sup> Social mobility is another expression for social classes.

a result, the aim of each strata of the society would be serving the whole nation not only the interest of a specific ethnic group.

Most of the problems that occurred and still occurring in the Nigerian society are the results of a corrupted and corrupting elite. The ruling elite did not only incite for ethnic quarrels verbally, but they were also accused of fraud and embezzlement to satisfy themselves and their ethnic group which they belong to. As a matter of reality, there are some specialists who agree that the corruption of the elite or the ones who are in a position of power stemmed from psychological problems, Emmanuel Olisa Iwobi claims that some analysts “*explained that there are different forms of psychological disorders driving corrupt minded individuals*” (16). In short, those causes were firmly linked to colonialism.

There are some specialists who suggested possible solutions and treatments for failing states. First of all, Emmanuel Olisa believes that any political candidate should be consulted by psychiatrists. Meaning, his personality should be analysed psychoanalytically for “*psychoanalysis has been inculcated in the system of most developed countries...*” (10). Second, after the process of nationalization and fostering the national identity, there comes the role of the civil society<sup>21</sup> as a democracy agent.

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<sup>21</sup> In political science, the civil society “*is defined as that part of society that is distinct from and largely independent of the state or public sphere*” (qtd. in Adekson 4). In other words, the civil society serves as a social watchdog. Moreover, it promotes and enforces the system of checks and balances in the country.

# Chapter II

Fanon's

Psychoanalysis

Frantz Fanon has a significant contribution in explaining the postcolonial phenomenon. His addition is mainly psychological as he worked as a psychiatrist in the Algerian colony. The psychoanalytic approach that he uses, in fact, explains the reason behind alienation, ambivalence as well as assimilation. Fanon, in his psychological study, relies on Sigmund and Anna Freud's perspectives. Thus, this chapter will deal with Fanon's analysis of postcolonial subjects from a Freudian point of view. That is to say, it will consider the structure of the self as follows: the Id, Ego and the superego.

## **1. Freud's psychoanalysis**

Psychoanalysis, as Freud defines it, is "a method of treating nervous patients medically" (Freud, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* 9). And, in order to know the causes of patients' neurosis, Freud was able, first, to define how the mind works. It is noteworthy to mention that the Freudian psychoanalysis was based on a clinical method<sup>22</sup>. As a result, he found that the mind is consisted of three related institutions with different levels of consciousness. He came then to designate them as: the Id, the Ego and the Superego.

### **1.1. Levels of Consciousness**

Freud labels the different human actions and reactions in terms of awareness. Meaning, how much individuals are aware of their behaviors. For that, he defines three levels of consciousness.

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<sup>22</sup> The clinical Method is a sum of methods that the psychoanalyst follow to designate the patient's kind of mental neurosis.

### **1.1.1. The Conscious Mind**

The conscious mind is responsible for reasoning events and actions. It is the part of the mind that is rational and that deals with logic. It is, also, consisted of aware-of feelings. Moreover, it is activated, mostly, at any moment except for sleeping. As a kind of illustration to what have been said, looking at a scarf and thinking of what the texture of it might be like, or from where it is bought are rational thinking that comes from the conscious.

### **1.1.2 The Unconscious Mind**

Freud simulates the mind to the idea of the iceberg. While the surface of the iceberg represents the conscious mind, its deep and unseen structure represents the unconscious mind (qtd. in Hayes 203). In other words, the unconscious contains feelings, thoughts and biological processes that individuals are not aware of. Precisely, the conscious mind tends to hide and repress unaccepted feelings and thoughts. For example, a mother calls one of her children with the name of her lost child. The mother, in this case, has feelings towards her dead child but the conscious tries to hide them.

### **1.1.3. The Preconscious Mind**

In relation to the iceberg theory, the preconscious is the boundary between the unconscious and the conscious mind. It helps in bringing some thoughts and feelings to the surface in the condition of providing a stimulus in a form of verbal images which are memory-residues (Freud, *The Ego and the Id* 10). Furthermore, since the conscious mind deals exclusively with the now, the preconscious attempts to retrieve feelings and thoughts that the conscious mind is not in a constant awareness of. For example, what students studied

before a month is not persistently present in their conscious mind. However, if someone asks them about what they have dealt with, the answer would be somehow immediate.

## **1.2. The Structure of the Psyche**

After serious researches in the field of clinical therapy, Freud has defined the personality of the mind. He claims that the mind is consisted of three different institutions.

### **1.2.1. The Id**

The id is the early as well as primitive institution that human beings acquire. For example: all what babies want is to eat and sleep, and they manifest their desires by crying. Moreover, children are narcissist and always in need to fulfill their selfish desires. Therefore, they are completely id-oriented. For Freud, as children grow up, the prototype<sup>23</sup> of the id comes to be associated with repressed pleasures and desires due to contact with the outer world's morals. It is a matter of fact that the entire id is unconscious (Freud, *the Ego and the Id* 14). As the pleasure principle is weakened by external influences, it projects its repressed wishes in different forms like in a form of slip of the tongue or dreams.

### **1.2.2. The Ego**

Each individual has a specific coherent organism that serves at operating mental processes which is the Ego. Since it is this part of the mind that is conscious, it is responsible for controlling motility<sup>24</sup>. Freud assumes that the early form of the Ego is an Id. Among the

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<sup>23</sup> The prototype is the very first and preliminary unedited version of a system or any other form.

<sup>24</sup> Motility means actions.

former institutions the ego works as a mediator. It is the conscious that tries to regulate the id in favor of the superego. Freud says “*the ego has the task of bringing the influence of the external world to bear upon the id and its tendencies*” (*The Ego and the Id* 15). In addition, the ego experiences and examines the external world by means of the perception-consciousness system<sup>25</sup>. The pcpt-cs system is necessarily cognitive and conscious.

### **1.2.3. The Superego**

As babies start to grow up, parents and society tries to regulate their id. So the sum of values and principles that individuals must follow are known as the superego. Primarily, the family represents the early source of those values and morals. At a certain age, when individuals start to have a contact outside the family scope, the society takes the responsibility of representing or at least fortifying those morals. Thus, the superego tries to control the id. That way, the id comes to be consisted of repressed wishes and desires. If the social rules, however, are not to be followed, the superego “*manifests itself essentially as a sense of guilt.*” (Freud, *The Ego and the Id* 8).

Freud gives an illustration to the three mentioned systems diagrammatically:

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<sup>25</sup> Perception-consciousness system is the scientific expression for using the sensory system consciously to deal with the external world. It was first introduced by Sigmund Freud.

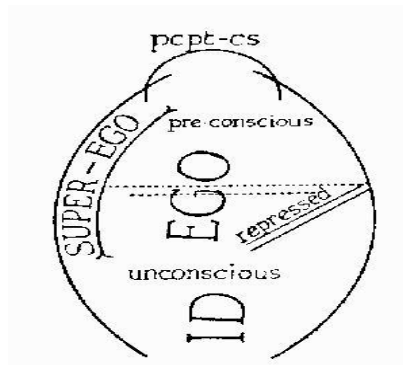


Figure (1): The structure of the psyche<sup>26</sup>

The superego, actually, checks on the id via the Ego. In turn, the ego links the Id to the external world without being directly exposed to it. Freud remarks, while explaining the diagram, “*You will observe how the super-ego goes down into the id...The id only deals with the external world through the medium of the ego...*”<sup>27</sup> The force of the superego, in fact, is represented, in the diagram, by the longitude of the line that represses the id which its influence diminishes according to the longitude of that line.

### 1.3. Kinds of Anxiety

According to Freud, the sound psyche system functions as above. However, if one system overwhelms the other, there occurs an unbalance. As a result, anxiety problems come to the surface because “*the ego is forced to acknowledge its weakness.*” ( Freud, *New Introductory Lectures* 105). Moreover, the trigger of the psyche system defect is either the outside world or the internal urges or both of them. Freud, distinguishes three different types of anxiety:

<sup>26</sup> Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures* (London: Hogarth Press 1933) 105.

<sup>27</sup> Sigmund Freud, *New Introductory Lectures* (London: Hogarth Press 1933) 105.

### **1.3.1. Objective anxiety**

It is also called the reality anxiety because it occurs due to concrete confrontations within real life situations. Those concrete confrontations which are considered as an objective danger, provokes feelings of fear. As a matter of fact, objective anxiety marks the struggle between the part of the mind known as the ego and the external world. The Alarm clock of the ego is the sensory system or the perception-consciousness system which makes the ego aware of any possible danger. For example: if someone is not used to hear noise at midnight around his house, he would be troubled by any sound coming at that specific time like thinking that a thief is trying to enter the house. The reaction, in reality, takes two different tendencies: “*one is anxiety—an affective reaction. The other is to take protective action*” (Hollitscher 59). Both of them can take place at the same time. However, anxiety, in some cases, paralyses the protective action when it is intense.

### **1.3.2 Neurotic Anxiety**

Neurotic anxiety is the result of internal impulses. It expresses the tension between the ego and the demands of the id. However, its consequences are projected to the external world. In other words, it describes a situation where the ego fears to show its weaknesses to the outside world. Unlike the objective anxiety, the neurotic danger is a fear from an unknown danger, for example: some people get terrified when they are alone in the dark.

### **1.3.3. Moral anxiety**

The moral anxiety is the consequence of an internal struggle between the ego and the superego. The superego always makes pressure on the ego to repress the id and to realize high

expectations. If, however, the ego violates the superego or the morals of parents and society, the moral anxiety, unlike the neurotic and objective one, manifests itself in a form of guilt. Albert Ellis et al. explains: “*the essential distinction between neurotic anxiety and moral anxiety is that the former is a fear of external consequences and the latter is related to fear of rebuke from the superego acting through the conscious*” (97). So, despite the neurotic or objective anxiety, the kind of fear of moral anxiety is a fear of being guilty not a fear from a known object or an unknown danger.

### **1.3.4. Nervous Breakdown**

When a possible unbalance takes place within the psychic system, the psychic self reacts by breaking into a kind of anxiety. However, if the mind is neither sound nor anxious, the other possibility is having a nervous breakdown. The nervous breakdown is synonymous to madness. In other words, being mad is losing control over the id. As a result, only unconscious actions would rule the roost. Thus, according to *the Astrological Magazine*, the nervous breakdown “*occurs by reason of the compulsive refusal of the natural self to remain any longer represented by the rigid demands of the conscious*” (78:188).

## **1.4. The Defense Mechanism**

Sigmund Freud, in fact, has established the foundation of the theory of the ego defense mechanisms<sup>28</sup>. However, his daughter, Anna Freud, has deeply investigated that field of research. Moreover, she distinguished and named the different kinds of defense mechanisms. The defense is used to give some relief to the psyche system from anxiety.

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<sup>28</sup> Defence Mechanism takes place automatically against some kinds of diseases as a reaction to protect the neurotic organism.

### **1.4.1. Repression**

Repression is “*a fundamental primal defense that serves the ego by defending it from impulses from the id that threaten its psychological stability*” (Ellis et al. 98). When one pushes a wish into the circle of the unconscious, the drive becomes fraught of energy. That energy may, anytime, show up.

### **1.4.2. Regression**

In its normal course, the ego develops from one stage to another and keeps progressing according to age and experiences. Nevertheless, it takes a defensive position against anxiety by either being fixated in a particular stage with no further development or it goes back to earlier stages. For example: when the child who becomes jealous from his brother or sister newborn baby, he acts like babies like bedwetting.

### **1.4.3. Projection**

The projection makes the patient, first, swings the lead and fools himself that he is not a victim of fear caused by the appearance of certain internal impulses. He “*will then impute that impulse or motive to someone else*” (Ellis et al. 100). For example: someone acts in an over protective way when it comes to his family for they think that all people are malicious because he is. That way, he imputes his bad behaviors on others. Psychologically, that mechanism is used by weak and impotent people.

#### **1.4.4. Introjection**

Introjection is the act of internalizing other's powerful and strong behaviors. It is activated in two different situations. The first normal situation is during infancy, when the child forms his superego with the help of parents. However, the second situation is a kind of mental pathology when the patient's morals are different from the morals held by the society. Meaning, behaving in a distinctive way may raise feelings of guilt. As a result, the patient, unconsciously, adopts the behavior of his surroundings as a defense mechanism. There are even other situations where the patient internalizes bad behaviors.

#### **1.4.5. Intellectualization**

It is a defense mechanism used to distance one's self from his actual reality by rationalizing the matter. The reasoning is used in such a way as if the problem is not lived by the patient. However, he looks at the subject from an objective point of view, for example: "*A patient who was told by his primary physician that he had cancer. He immediately began to do large amounts of research on his form of cancer*" (Ellis et al. 100).

#### **1.4.6. Sublimation**

Sublimation is a means of expressing the impulses of the id but in a social and suitable way. It is as the most helpful as well as powerful defense mechanism to protect the ego from unpleasant feelings. In other words, any repressed wish bears an emotional load has to be discharged. Sublimation, for specialist, is considered as an agent to creativeness. For example: some people repress their rage or sadness by drawing gothic paintings or by writing poetry.

## **1.5. The Clinical Method**

### **1.5.1. Free Association:**

Freud, as a therapist, faced problems concerning the old methods of inspecting the unconscious. One of those problems was the inability of hysterical patient to be hypnotized. For that, he suggests a new clinical method to access the unconscious while the patient is still awake. As a result, the patient would be free from the orientations of his conscious. The patient has to lie on a couch with his eyes closed and talk of whatever comes to his mind starting by the last thing that he may remember. That method, in fact, proved to be uneasily effective. The reason behind that is that the unconscious tries its best to cover unpleasant thoughts. Freud claims that any disorder's symptoms are a defensive mechanism against certain thoughts. Meaning, the self prefers to suffer from the symptoms other than to deal with painful thoughts. When free association is applied to solve traumatic experiences, some problems may come to the surface. For example: when repressed traumatic thoughts of childhood memories are recalled, the solutions that the one has seen as possible when he was a child, can no longer be appropriate for current situations. The ego that way is trapped between two personalities. Anton O. Kris argues that the patient is under, "*Two forms or organizations of loving or two aspects of self-image may now be in conflict—a conflict of ambivalence*" (57).

### **1.5.2. Transference**

Transference is an unconscious relationship that develops between the patient and his psychologist. Certainly, the unconscious relationship is a result of the clinical methods used

by the analyst. Mostly, it happens during the cathartic method<sup>29</sup> of treatment. The enigma is that while or instead of remembering some past traumatic experiences, the patient experiences them at the time of therapy. The unconscious relationship starts to develop when the patient share his experience with his therapist. Note that it does not occur intentionally but in an unconscious way.

### **1.5.3. Dreams Interpretation**

There is a relationship between reality and dreams. As a matter of fact, daily pleasures and pains are manifested during sleeping in a form of symbols. In a Freudian view, there is a strong connection between memories and dreams (Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* 380-381). However, not all memories can be accessible in real life other than dreams. In cases of traumatic neurosis, the victim experiences complementing dreams which compensate what happens in reality in order to maintain balance. Fortunately, therapists use dreams as a remedy after figuring out one's problems. In other cases, analysts consider dreams as a prediction of mental disorders. As a result, recovery, in those cases, seems to be easier. Freud used free association to recall and interpret dreams. The method seems too much useful that he dubs the "via regia"<sup>30</sup> to the unconscious.

## **2. Fanon's psychoanalysis of the colonial subjects**

Frantz Fanon tries to explain the colonial discourse from a psychological point of view in which he includes notions of alienation, ambivalence and assimilation.

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<sup>29</sup> in the cathartic method the hypnotised patient is supposed to recall forgotten yet highly emotional memories.

<sup>30</sup> Via regia means the royal road.

## 2.1. Alienation

Frantz Fanon proves, analytically, what led the colonized to alienate himself. He strongly believes that “*as its extreme, the myth of the negro, the idea of the negro, can become the decisive factor of an authentic alienation*” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 204). Accordingly, in order to understand the factors which cause alienation, the question of the myth of the Negro must be analyzed. So this part of this chapter is of a significant importance for it will help in understanding how the colonizer sees the colonized, and how the stereotypes produced by them affect the psychology of the oppressed. It is worth noticing that what follows mainly discusses the part of the mind known as the id.

Frantz Fanon tries to give an account to how the colonizer succeeded in pushing the colonized to enter the scope of nothingness. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, the colonizer, in order to exploit Africans, claimed that the reason behind his presence in the region was to bring civilization to Africans which entails that Africans did not have a civilization. In the same vein, they declared that they are superior because they are whites and “*the Negro is a stage in the slow evolution of monkey into man*” (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* 17). In fact, those theories shaped the myth of the Negro. Fanon, after being aware of the political impulses within the colonial discourse, defines the nature of relationships between the colonizer and the colonized as an act of psychological transference for “*what is often called the black soul is a white man’s artifact*” (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* 16). The matter goes as follows, within the colonial discourse, the patient is the colonized and the doctor is the colonizer. After the creation of the myth of the Negro, blacks, while experiencing feelings of inferiority, transfer their feelings to the colonizer who is supposed to

play the role of being superior. By time, that kind of relationship would be developed, unconsciously, even by whites. The idea is to be more simplified later under this title.

To indicate the relationship between the myth of the Negro and the id, we must examine the contact zone and its influence on black individuals. In normal situations the child forms his superego primarily in cooperation with his parents and family who represent the first outer source of knowledge about social practices and norms. Moreover, as I stressed before, the role of the society, in the first place, is to fortify those ideals. However, as Fanon puts it: “*A normal Negro child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world*” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 142). For example, Frantz Fanon grew up in a normal black Martiniquean society. However, the contact of Martiniquean society with whites was determined. One of the remarks that was made by the French was that the middle-class Martiniqueans, Fanon was one of them, could not speak “*the French of France, the French man’s French, French French*” (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* 20). Therefore, the reaction of Fanon, the normal child, was reflected on his cultural isolation. Hussein Bulhan, having studied the childhood of Fanon, says about him: “*During latency, the ego-dystonic quality of the general social milieu heightened, but could not be adequately resolved at this tender age. A conscious awareness of entrenched alienation had to wait a few years.*” (Bulhan 26). Furthermore, what makes it worse is that blacks were convinced by the myth of the Negro. The acceptance takes two different forms. The first one is when blacks are aware and conscious of their choice which is believing in the myth. For example: a black woman from Antilles thought that the reason why Aimé Césaire<sup>31</sup> is defending the black race is because he sees it as a curse. Moreover, she even refuses the idea of marrying a black man despite the fact that she is a black woman. She says: “*As far as I am concerned, I wouldn't marry a Negro for anything in the world*” (Fanon, *Black Skin, White*

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<sup>31</sup> Aimé Césaire is a French poet and one of the founders of the Negritude movement in France.

*Masks* 48). The other form of acceptance is a kind of defense mechanism by projecting the unpleasant feeling unconsciously without being aware that the projection is a kind of admission. For example: Jean Veneuse was a black man who was born in the Antilles and France for a few years, the experience which made him feel like a European. Fanon adds that Jean said to Andrée the white women whom he loved, “*tell me, Andrée darling...in spite of my color, would you agree to marry me if I asked you?*”(qtd. in *Black Skin, White Masks* 78). So, by saying “*in spite of my color*”, he unconsciously admitted that he thought of himself as an inferior. Shockingly, white people at a certain point started, themselves, to believe in the myth of the Negro. Fanon, actually, used free association tests to come to the already mentioned idea. In a calm and relaxed atmosphere, he intentionally inserted the word Negro in his talk. He then remarked that the word evoked anxiety and discomfort for whites. The word Negro led them to associate expressions like, savage, animal, devil and sin. Here, the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized starts to be developed unconsciously due to the psychological transference as mentioned awhile ago. In fact, the adoption of the myth of the Negro by the white’s unconscious does not only influence white people yet blacks as well. For as much as the black child rises in such an antagonism, he would, nonetheless, develop a kind of pathology.

Here we come to the conclusion that blacks are pushed to think of themselves as inferior thus they reject their own black culture. The myth of the Negro obliges black individuals, after the contact with the white race, to choose between their family or the society. Taking into attention that black children accept the idea that their families are inferior and savage. Thus, since blacks are savage and inferior then they are controlled by desires only, which means, the part of the mind known as the id. Fanon explains it as, “*the individual who climbs up into society\_white and civilized\_tends to reject his family\_black and*

*savage\_on the plane of imagination... and the family structure is cast back into the id."*  
 (Black Skin, White Masks 149). To understand it more we consider the following scheme:

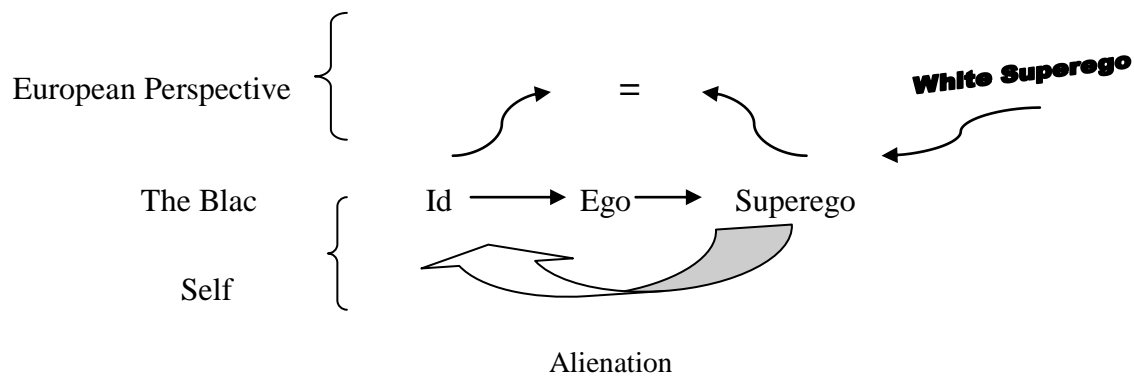


Figure (2): The Act of Alienation

Europeans, in fact, tend to ignore the superego of blacks claiming that since they do not have a civilization then they do not have a superego as well. That way, for Europeans, the existed black culture, the existed black superego is not different from the id. When a normal black child contacts whites he himself becomes convinced that the area that he was raised in is inferior and savage. That is how the black self tries to alienate itself. It becomes a part of the id because having a black culture starts to be a desire that must be repressed not a modal. The repression is a kind of defense mechanism which makes the ego avoids possible intimidation from whites. At the end, what replaces the black superego is the white superego. For example: Nigerians used to wear the Buba<sup>32</sup>. However, Britain introduced a new fashion that Nigerians started to pursue even if the new dress does not make them feel comfortable because they would like to wear the traditional attire which they are used to. As a conclusion the traditional dress becomes a repressed wish.

<sup>32</sup> is a blouse that does not fit tightly with long sleeves and round or V-shaped neckline. Its long is a bit lower the waistline. Used by both men and women.

## 2.2. Ambivalence

The reasons behind ambivalence must be apparent by now. It is obvious that blacks are ambivalent towards their indigenous culture since the introduction of a white superego. In fact, the way of introducing the white culture as an alternative to the primordial identity causes ambivalence. In that situation, the black man is obliged to choose between two cultures or even the matter may put him in the purgatory. Homi Bhabha says: “ *In occupying two places at once - or three in Fanon's case - the depersonalized, dislocated colonial subject can become 'an incalculable object, quite literally, difficult to place'*” (qtd. in Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* xxii). The white culture's presence and introducing it as a superior culture cause moral anxiety. To put it simply, the state of ambivalence is a form of neurotic anxiety resulted from the struggle between the cast back black superego and the ego. Sometimes the ego considers the black superego as unwanted and unaccepted impulses that should not be projected to the external world. In fact, ambivalence as a kind of defense mechanism for instead of regression, the self takes fixation as a protective move. As a result, Frantz Fanon asks the question “*What does the black man want?*” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 10). In fact, the answer to this question is to be tackled in the next titles. However, it is in this part of the chapter where the former question should be analyzed. Moreover, what follows will clarify the relationship between the ambivalent self and the Freudian concept of the human ego.

In the eighteenth century, before globalization, black man, reasonably, does not indicate only the skin color but also the black culture. As a result, the black culture is, inevitably a part of the black self whether it is considered as a superego or an id. Actually, the whole question revolves around those two considerations which create a kind of ambivalence. Moreover, the system that is responsible of settling the problem is the ego. Thus, the question

of what the black man wants marks the ego's struggle between what is inner and the outer world, between the One and the Other and between what is present and what is absent.

To deeply grasp the last sentence, one must go back to the concept of alienation. The previous title shows the myth of the Negro as the reason behind alienation which is the first step towards ambivalence. Actually, to confirm the myth of the Negro, the colonizer shall not admit differentiation but must follow the negation of identity. Simply put, the colonizer does not see the black culture as different from the white culture but as inferior in quality to that of the white race which entails Otherness. James Jeffrey Roche, sarcastically conveys truth by writing "*We are the chosen people-look at the hue of our skins! Others are black and yellow-that is because of their sins.*" (qtd. in Jacobson 185). The concept of Otherness, as a matter of fact, does not have relation to the skin color only but also to the question of representation. It goes without saying that the very foundation of Otherness is built on an illusionary ground. Because when we say that something is different, the expression is nearer to reality. However, when we say that something is other that is because of the nature of the discursive process<sup>33</sup>. And it is that process which creates a negation of identity. Meaning, the black culture was not seen as different but negated and being othered through claiming its inferiority. Surprisingly, the binary opposition reality/ representation that the nature of Otherness discloses can be more understood via the concept of simulacra by Jean Baudrillard.

For Baudrillard<sup>34</sup>, reality is not properly presented due to several factors. Dino Franco Felluga says, "*we are confronted with a precession of simulacra; that is, the representation precedes and determines the real. There is no longer any distinction between reality and its*

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<sup>33</sup> For example: sex is a biological difference. In the contrary, gender is an act of Otherness for the sake of discrimination.

<sup>34</sup> Jean Baudrillard is a French philosopher who comments on the post-modernist period. He is famous of his theories on Simulacra and Simulation.

*representation; there is only the simulacrum.*” (282). Applying the saying to the colonial discourse presupposes that the myth of the Negro and the negation of identity which includes Otherness is the simulacrum. So, westerners do not represent the colonial subject as they are but as how the colonizer wants them to be to fit their agendas. In a Fanonian reading, Homi Bhabha says, “*The image is at once a metaphoric substitution, an illusion of presence and by that same token a metonym<sup>35</sup>; a sign of its absence and loss*” (qtd. in Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* xvii). Bhabha confirms that the image of identity created by the colonizer does not represent the real identity of blacks. Thus, there is only an image and a simulacrum of the black identity no more. After explaining the duality One/ Other the next binary presence/ absence seem of a little difficulty.

Absenting the black culture by the colonized is the essence of ambivalence. When blacks are pushed to believe that their culture does not exist while they are constructing it, their ego would be caught in-between absence and presence. The matter is not as easy as rejecting whites’ theories because as Jean Baudrillard says, “*Reality itself has begun merely to imitate the model, which now precedes and determines the real world*” (Felluga 282). Unfortunately, the making-absent of the black culture makes them estranged from their identity and seeking for a substitutional. Tackling concepts like Otherness and presence/absence may raise the question of why not tackling them under the title of alienation. In fact, those concepts have more to do with ambivalence rather than alienation. Erstwhile, I have mentioned that Otherness is an illusion created by the master which leads to absenting the black culture by the negation of identity. As a result, since there still exists some bearer of truth to the identity of blacks then they cannot be completely alienated but somehow ambivalent. Homi Bhabha says, “*the image, as point of identification- marks the site of an ambivalence. Its representation is always -spatially split - it makes present something that is*

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<sup>35</sup> Metonym is what serves as a substitution to a word or expression.

*absent...*”(qtd. in Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* xvii). The following scheme simplifies the act of ambivalence:

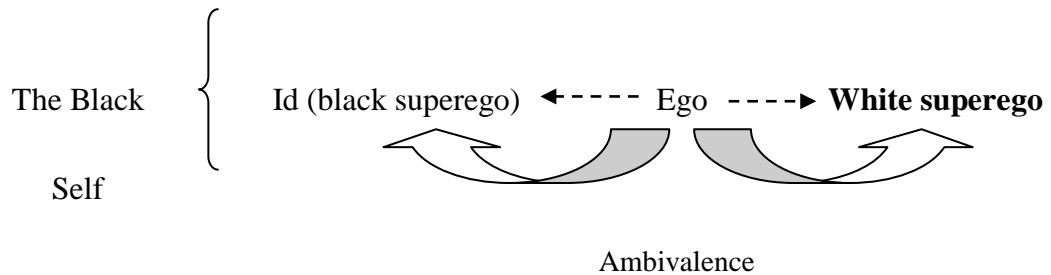


Figure (3): The Act of Ambivalence

In normal situations, the ego regulates the id in favour of the superego. However, in the colonial case, the ego becomes no longer sure of what it should do. Fanon says, “*When the Negro makes contact with the white world, a certain sensitizing action takes place. If his psychic structure is weak, one observes a collapse of the ego*” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 154). Thus, the collapse of the ego is manifested in the act of ambivalence.

The right reaction or cure to ambivalence is intellectualization. Meaning, as much as the black man is aware of his situation as well as his internal impulses, he would have more chance in finding the right place to locate himself. In fact, Jean-Paul Sartre attempted at raising awareness, Fanon says, “*Orpheé Noir is a date in the intellectualization of the experience of being black*” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 134).

### 2.3. Assimilation

In answering the previously discussed question, Fanon shows no reluctance. He directly assumes that “*the black man wants to be white*” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 11). Moreover, he, in fact, holds no hope concerning the salvation of the black identity. Fanon

adds: “*The black man wants to be like the white man. For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white.*” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 12). It is worth questioning how did Fanon come to that conclusion. As a psychoanalyst, he used the dream interpretation method to access blacks unconscious. For example: a patient told his dream to Frantz Fanon. The dream is about him walking exhausted and feeling that something was about to happen. After climbing barricades and walls and walking through an empty hall, he heard noise and, he was not sure of opening the door which, at the end, he opened it. In that room he found white men. The surprise was that he found out that he was white too (Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* 99). In a Freudian explanation, we have said that dream anxiety is a consequence of real life pathology. Moreover, the dream is a complementary dream because it is an unconscious wish fulfilment. At last, Fanon infer that his patient is having an inferiority complex due to the dilemma of “*turn white or disappear*” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 100).

Alienation, even if it seems distinct, it, in reality, occurs at both levels: ambivalence and assimilation. For ambivalence and assimilation are the results of the act of alienation. The ambivalent self either sometimes alienate itself to adopt a white culture or, in other cases, blacks completely abandon their culture and project those acts of alienation through assimilation. As I have stressed before, the reason behind ambivalence is the delusion of the concept of Otherness. Nevertheless, the majority of blacks choose to definitely assimilate for other reasons.

Fanon, actually, suggests two stages of assimilation. The first stage occurs at the level of the conscious. Of course, the black man wants to be white because he claims the later as superior. Fanon says, “*Long ago the black man admitted the unarguable superiority of the white man, and all his efforts are aimed at achieving a white existence*” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 228). The primary tool of assimilation is language. For Fanon, to take in hands one’s

culture is to master the language that expresses it. Furthermore, mastering a language makes the Negro whiter and nearer to a genuine human being. That can be clearer by tackling it in the frame of reference and comparison. For example, when a Negro expresses himself through an authentic French language in France, he is being referred to as a book. Whereas, in Martinique, which was a French colony, his fellows would say that “*He talks like a white man*” (qtd. in Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* 21). Away from language use, the black man even adopts whites’ manners and attitudes<sup>36</sup>. In fact, at the level of this stage, the black self is split and behaves according to the space that is present in. Fanon says, “*The black man has two dimensions, one with his fellows and the other with the white men. A Negro behaves differently with a white man and with another Negro*” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 104).

Fanon realized that those conscious actions would soon be done unconsciously which is supposed to be the second stage of assimilation. Being unconscious of assimilating stems from the fact that it is considered as an introjection other than assimilation. The introjection is a reaction against the moral anxiety resulted from the conflict between the ego and the white superego. That defense mechanism is used to avoid judgment and intimidation by internalizing whites’ behaviors unconsciously because they control “*the ruling ideas, values, and institutions that not only confirm and reinforce their narcissism, sense of superiority, and privileged status, but also devalue the attributes of the dominated...*” (Bulhan 152). Alistair Kee in one of his critics remarks that “*Fanon knows that this nervous condition reaches into the unconscious: the black man is a Negro even in his solitude, through the ever present judgment of the ever absent master*” (11). Finally, the illustration of the assimilating self goes as follows:

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<sup>36</sup> Rakotovo was a Malagasy prisoner in the French colony of Madagascar where it happened to have Senegalese torturers. The prisoner narrates his bitter experience stating: “*The Senegalese made me kneel with my wrists facing outward; then he took wooden tongs and squeezed my hands together; then, with me kneeling and my two hands pressed together, he put his foot on the back of my neck and forced my head down into the bucket*” (qtd. in Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks* 104).

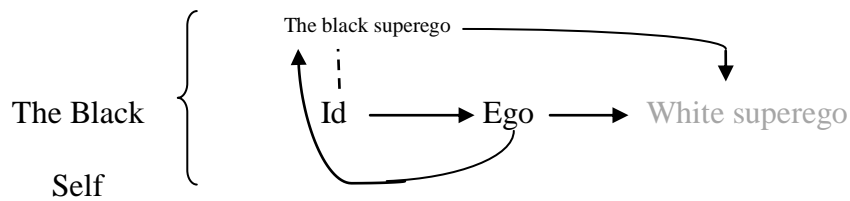


Figure (5): Assimilation at the first stag



Figure (6): Assimilation at the second stage

In the first modal, the Ego, which is the responsible of conscious actions, brings out the repressed black superego into the surface when blacks are among their fellows. However, in the second modal, the Ego is weakened even in the absence of whites' motives. Therefore, the repressed wish of behaving like a white man in front of blacks comes to the surface without the permission of the Ego.

## 2.4. Fanon's three Phases of Decolonization

In each modern revolution, intellectual people, or nationalists, are the responsible ones for decolonizing the nation. Moreover, their contribution is reflected on the social and political arenas. In fact, the process of decolonization is the result of a psychological development which Fanon assorts into three different stages.

In the first stage, natives and intellectuals adopt a system of identification introduced by the colonizer. That is to say, blacks at this stage accept the stereotypes produced by the white community and start to hound what they believe as a superior culture. This stage, in reality, is

very important in the quest of finding the black identity for they had, first, to experience what it is not to find what it really is. Actually, the black man cannot assimilate successfully and at the same time trying to assimilate puts away the possibility of rejecting the white culture entirely, Fanon says, “*they could neither quite reject them nor integrate them*” (The Wretched of the Earth xlv). The true reason behind the ineffective assimilation is the skin color obstacle, Fanon adds: “...*The Other is perceived on the level of the body image, absolutely as the not-self-that is, the unidentifiable, unassimilable*” (Black Skin, White Masks 161). An evidence shown using psychoanalysis that the limits of this stages is reached when the black man recognizes the ineluctable stumbling block that the skin color causes.

The second phase in the process of decolonization comes as a result to the failed assimilation. So, when the black man finds no way out to assimilate and to be accepted among the white community, he starts to reject the white culture. In other words, even if the black man adopts the values of whites which are considered as superior, in the European community, the black man is still rejected, Fanon explains, “...*the educated Negro suddenly discovers that he is rejected by a civilization which he has none the less assimilated*” (Black Skin, White Masks 93). It is at this stage that the black intellectual shakes his mind to find a refuge in his original culture since it is the only true and possible solution. Thus, memory is of a significant importance to bring back what was lived then lost during the colonized intellectual’s childhood. Fanon illustrates, “*he is content to remember. Old childhood memories will surface...*” (The Wretched of the Earth 159). As a result, taking a step towards rediscovering the black culture is considered as the same first step of rejecting whites’ culture.

After longing to the black culture, the black intellectual man announces a revolution. The meant revolution, in this context, is an intellectual revolution for even if the colonizer leaves the colonized lands, their minds would be still occupied by Westerly-left thoughts and

attitudes. According to Fanon, the intellectual, at first loses himself because of his surroundings yet the abruptness is that because of his surroundings, as well, the black intellectual would find himself again. Moreover, he does not claim the discovery to himself only but he, also, helps the others who are living the same condition as him, Fanon identifies the process as “*a combat stage where the colonized writer, after having tried to lose himself among the people, with the people, will rouse the people*” ( *The Wretched of the Earth* 159).

What is worth noting in Fanon’s stages of decolonization is that the society, after passing by all of those stages, would be never the same again. Instead, the society would be consisted of hybridized individuals at two different levels. The first level is the new generation which is the product of the third space created by the clash between the colonizer and the colonized. The second kind of hybridization occurs at the level of the individual who experienced the colonial as well as the post-colonial era. In fact, the thoughts and psychology of that individual would never return to it pure childhood state.

# Chapter III

Ezekiel's

Representation of Post-

colonial Nigeria

To begin with, the short story, *My Uncle Ezekiel*, does not necessarily project, literally, the analysis and critic included in the previous chapter. However, what is worth noting is that there is a mood which pervades the story. Substantially, the mood is the product of colonialism and its accompanying psychological outcomes. Thus, the big puzzle had to be presented before deciphering only a piece of it. *My Uncle Ezekiel* is a short story written in 2005 by Helon Habila. Habila is a Nigerian who was born in the post-colonial era. Moreover, his story is set during that time, precisely, during the age of Nigeria's prosperity as well as its downfall which date back from the 1970s up to the 1990s. The story, even if it deals with the years following the independence, it always, in one way or another, alludes to the colonial period. In fact, the plot is evenly comprehensible and straightforward. Nevertheless, the art lies in its delicate symbolism and connotations. The events of the story follow the life and death of an ordinary man in a modernist-like storyline. The writer opens the short story by the death of Ezekiel, the protagonist, over which people wonder whether it was the drink or the cold that killed him. The rest of the story tries to settle the matter by justifying the judgment of the narrator who assumes that the true reason behind his death was the cold. In the meanwhile, the narrator, who is Ezekiel's nephew, gives a brief yet a rich account on the situation of Nigeria after independence which will be discussed in this chapter.

## **1. Circumstances**

In the story, while circumstances indicate the historical context of the post-colonial and, using allusion, colonial Nigeria, the psyche of Ezekiel projects the impact of those circumstances. The main circumstances are the different crisis that he witnesses like getting him out of his work with the refusal of his petition to return back from the Ministry of Justice.

Under the latter and other psychological pressures, Ezekiel drinks as a conscious defence mechanism.

### 1.1. The Post-lucid

Before the physical presence of Britain in Nigeria, it followed peaceful strategies to cover its long-term political and economic objectives. The strategies, in fact, were used mainly on a psychological level. Moreover, the primary tool that influenced blacks the most was the Christian missionaries. Actually, the British used religion to justify their illegal existence in Africa. In addition, religion participated in shaping the myth of the Negro, William Lester states, “*White supremacy is taught in the bible. Verified by history, justified by civilization, and instinctively believed in by all races...*” (1). In the short story, *My Uncle Ezekiel*, however the covered truth is symbolized by the use of drink.

The story opens by the mysterious death of Ezekiel for while some think that he died because of over drinking, the narrator reveals that the true reason behind his death was the cold. In fact, there is some bearing of truth behind their assumption. Meaning, Ezekiel’s body is found dead holding a bottle of drink with the lettering: Christian Brothers. However, it was the harmattan<sup>37</sup> that killed him. Placing the matter in the colonial discourse entails that religion itself was not the reason behind Nigeria’s sufferings but it was colonialism.

The harmattan, the writer explains, “*moves in surges, peaking and subsiding, circling, as if reconnoitering...*” (108). Indeed, Britain never acts without setting plans and programs. Concerning Nigeria, for example, it first sent explorers circling before colonizing “*swooping down on houses, trees, towns...covering everything before it in fine white desert dust...*”

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<sup>37</sup> The Harmattan is a northeasterly trade wind.

(108). The narrator then, finally, admits that “*Uncle Ezekiel stood no chance against it*” (108). In other words, the whole Nigerian population did not survive the colonial damage. As a result, drinking or religion was the lethe of the inescapable colonial damage. When Lamana blames his uncle of losing everything due to drinking and asks him to quit it, Ezekiel says, “*you won’t understand...it makes life bearable...*” (114).

Nigeria was left dependent on Britain in matters of economics and politics. Nevertheless, it was money which, sometimes, eased matters for Nigerians otherwise life would be unsupportable. The writer, in his short story, indicates the period of high prosperity in the Nigerian history, Habila says, “*It was the 1970s, the golden decade of Nigeria’s history...The civil war was over, oil had just been discovered, and according to the Head of State, money was not the problem but ways to spend it*” (109). In the same vein, since Nigeria proved itself to be beneficial for Britain when oil was discovered, it also benefited from the discovery. However, the country suffered from an economic crisis when petroleum prices fell. In fact, it was the mismanagement and the instant spending of wealth without setting long-term strategies that harmed the country’s economy. Actually, Nigeria is prevented from having long-term strategies due to its dependence on Britain. Draw on analogy, that flow of events seems to prove the idea of history repeats itself because Nigeria had a similar prosperity during colonialism. For example, whilst money was the good side of Britain’s post-colonial exploitation of Nigeria, bringing civilization like ending slave trade, turning Nigeria into an urbanized country and promoting education were the good side of Britain’s exploitation of the colonial Nigeria. In fact, the drink or religion covers the bad side in favor of the good one which is illustrated in the story in two different situations.

The first situation is when Ezekiel is under the influence of alcohol which blinds his senses as a matter of symbolism. By the time when Lamana was asking his uncle to quit

drinking, he was still young. For him, he could not fully grasp his uncle's behavior until he became an adult. He was, actually, twenty-two when he started to taste "*the sense of false hope alcohol can give in dire moments*" (114). Accordingly, when the one is sober from the drink and from religion's hypnotism, he comes to the conclusion that Britain wanted and still wants only one thing from Nigeria which is exploitation. All what is left then is no more than tautologies.

The second situation, however, literally presents religion as a manipulative tool. Ezekiel, surprisingly, manages to stop drinking for a whole year. In the meanwhile, he tries to find relief in the church. Meaning, he tries to form a new perspective concerning Christianity while he is still sober. Once, he stops by a church and listens to the sermons but he criticizes them in front of Lamana saying, "*I find the sermons too tedious...the preachers are too self-righteous. What do they know about life?*" (116) Lamana feels happy when his uncle talked like that because it shows that there is still a continuing resistance of Ezekiel or Nigeria in general, Lamana says, "*I loved it when he talked like that; it showed that he still had some spark left inside him*" (116).

## **1.2. The Ministry of Justice**

The colonial forces had promised Africans a western education before they would be able to govern themselves. The idea, in fact, was no more than an empty promise. In the short story *My Uncle Ezekiel*, the Ministry of Justice illustrates the true face of colonialism.

The protagonist, Ezekiel, nearly, simulates the persona of Dr. James Africanus Horton<sup>38</sup>. On the one hand, Horton took on the claim that Britain's presence in Africa was to bring civilization to Blacks nevertheless it would leave the area as soon as Africans are ready to govern themselves. He, in fact, proved himself to be successful as he worked in the British army as a doctor. Moreover, he was known as a political thinker. On the other hand, Uncle Ezekiel studies law at university. Besides, he has that ambition, when he finishes the westerly proposed education, to become a lawyer and defend his family, in Horton's case, to defend his country. In the context of the story, While Uncle Ezekiel is showing his new car to his sister and her son when he visits them, he is supposed to take his law degree in a year's time so that he would be able to take responsibility over his family and country, Ezekiel says to his nephew, Lamana, "*anybody tells you any nonsense just let me know when I come back. Make a long list, I'll sue them ...you hear...*" (110).

As a matter of fact, the other group of nationalists<sup>39</sup> is given a voice in the story. The group, actually, is represented by Lamana's father who did not take Ezekiel's talk as serious as it should be. He, instead, snorted and "*never thought of Uncle Ezekiel even then\_\_ perhaps he had already sensed the rot in the core, the way cats are said to detect a dying man long before the event, and decided to keep my uncle at arms length*" (110). As the story progresses, Ezekiel fails the law exams nevertheless he manages to get a job in the magistrate court in Bauchi as a registrar. Unfortunately, he got a job suspension when he does not attend for a whole month due to a car accident which seems as an untruthful reason. However, it is because he used to come drunk to office and vomit on his table which officers had to wash.

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<sup>38</sup> The first chapter presented the forms of resistance that Nigerians followed. For the western-educated Nigerians who belong to the first group, they took benefits of both the civilizing missions and at the same time valued their own culture which seems psychologically paradoxical

<sup>39</sup> I have said in the first chapter that the second group knew from the beginning that Britain is untrustworthy. Thus, any other way other than asking for an immediate independence is meaningless.

Justly, the drink or religion is the product of colonialism for if there were no colonial problems, Ezekiel would not confuse between work's time and drinking.

Ezekiel, in the beginning, is only suspended from work, none the less, the Ministry of Justice later expels him completely from his job. In the post-colonial context, history repeats itself again. When there was money, there was a high demand of working positions as well to benefit from workers. However, workers, during the crisis, were not only suspended but also removed from work illegally, Ezekiel illustrates, "*I am writing a letter to the Ministry of Justice...they are wicked bastards...you must see the letter they sent me last week, terminating my appointment...Here, read it. This is illegal...they can't do this...I am a lawyer, I know my rights...*" (115). The bitter truth is that even if he knows his rights, the situation will not save him. Lamana wants his uncle to understand that he is writing a letter in vain, and that the drink, really, has blinded his vision, Lamana says, "*I wanted to tell him...that if he could open his eyes he would see that he really had no chance with his petition...that the country had changed drastically since the last time he was sober*" (115). Here, the writer shows how colonialism and postcolonialism have damaged and changed Nigeria radically, and how the drink or religion has blinded Nigerian's vision.

## **2. Psychological Impact: The Post-lucid**

In a Fanonian reading, the drink illustrates all the three concepts together: alienation, ambivalence and assimilation. Away from assimilating whites' habits concerning drinking, adopting Christianity marks a turning point for blacks because religion is a part of culture. Clearly, repressing the blacks' culture comes only after believing in the myth of the Negro which is the reason behind an authentic alienation.

## 2.1. Alienation

Alienation, in the story, is manifested in two different forms through the use of symbolism. First, the Ministry of Justice marked the beginning of his alienation. Whereas, selling furniture is regarded as the physical manifestation of alienation in Habila's story.

### 2.1.1. The Ministry of Justice

In fact, accepting to adopt whites' culture system of education and religion, made blacks admit, unconsciously, that they do not have a civilization which is a part of the myth of the Negro's project. Consequently, since Africans who believed in the hoax have already accepted the myth of the Negro as Fanon assumes, thus, alienation was a determined destiny for them. Fanon, ironically, declares that "*the black man is supposed to be a good nigger; once this has been laid down, the rest follows of itself*" (*Black Skin, White Masks* 35). When the expression "a good nigger" is to be examined, one notices that if blacks try to prove that they are good niggers then they are confirming the idea of superiority and inferiority. Moreover, blacks do not become good niggers unless they abandon their own culture which is an act of alienation.

The psychology of Ezekiel, actually, changes dramatically throughout the story due to circumstances like the influence of the Ministry of Justice. When he was young, Ezekiel was good looking and "*he had been so full of promise*" (108). Just like Nigeria before colonization. Seemingly, everything for him is taking a promising direction. He is studying law at university. Moreover, he earns a great deal of money just from his bursary to the point where he could buy a car because it is the age of good times. However, for certain reasons, he fails his law exams and manages to work in the magistrate. Unfortunately, the magistrate

suspends then expels him from work due to his drinking history which is, in the first place, the product of colonialism. So, the fact that he is married and has two children that he should look after complicates matters. As a result, he chooses to alienate himself from the current situation, Lamana says, *“Each calamity pushed him [Ezekiel] deeper into drinking...”* (112). Actually, Ezekiel thinks that he can have a second chance, so he writes a petition letter to the Ministry of Justice. In his early days, he used, always, to find a way out of his problems by using his wit and tricks. For example, once, he visited his sister and he was supposed to give her a rooster sent by their mother but he has already eaten it. So, to distract his sister’s attention, Ezekiel told her a funny story which saved him, he said, *“I tied its legs and put it in the car boot...but it somehow undone the knot with his beak...you know how smart these village roosters are...when I opened the boot...it flew out. prrrr!”* (110). Unfortunately, *“Ezekiel stood no chance against it [the harmattan]”*<sup>40</sup>. He had no chance against the ministry of Justice because, as Lamana says, *“he was like a trickster who had now suddenly discovered that his bag of tricks was really and truly empty”* (110). At the end, he moves from Bauchi to his grandparents’ house where he starts to manifest his alienation in a different way.

### **2.1.2. Furniture**

When Ezekiel is suspended from work, he no longer has money to buy alcohol not even to buy food. As a result, he starts to sell things from his own house, Lamana illustrates, *“The living room was even worse than I remembered from my last visit: the black-and-white TV was gone; the dirty threadbare rug...was also gone...”* (114). His drinking and selling habits, in fact, continue to take place even when he moves to his grandparents’ house.

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<sup>40</sup> The Harmattan symbolizes colonialism which is represented, In that context, by the Ministry of Justice.

Ezekiel's grandparents' house represents Nigeria as a land. Furthermore, he chooses to alienate himself from his land other than safeguarding it. Ezekiel, according to traditions, is the only heir of the house. When he moves there to live with his grandparents, he loots their wealth in favor of drinking "*he pilfered grandma's jewellery, and foodstuff, and livestock, anything at all that he could turn into cash, to keep himself in booze*" (116). Soon after, his grandparents' die within week of each other, and he continues with his bad habits. Thence, Lamana, when Ezekiel dies, visits the house and becomes surprised because his uncle "*had sold every stick of furniture in the house, including the bed he slept on*" (111). As if he completely alienates himself before his death.

To more simplify the psychological damage brought about by Britain, one must examine Fanon's psychoanalysis. As a matter of fact, the drink is considered as an important aspect throughout two major periods: the age of good times and the crisis. In the period of Nigeria's economic boom, youthful indiscretion leads Ezekiel to assimilate and act like a wealthy white man. He drives car, studies at university, has many illegitimate relationships and finally drinks. It is previously mentioned that the instant spending of wealth without setting long-term plans has put Nigeria in a serious crisis. During the crisis, Ezekiel drinks to bust his mood and to forget about daily life troubles. In the same vein, since there is a crisis and the Ministry of Justice terminates his appointment, he starts to sell what is available in the house of his grandparents to buy booze. In parallel, Britain used religion which, according to whites, dictates that they should bring civilization to blacks who were drunk of Britain's foxiness. However, when Nigerians discovered the lies of Britain, it was religion that redeemed their deeds.

There was a pressure imposed on Ezekiel's Ego which internalizes the surrounding abnormal disorder. It is acknowledged before that the Ego tests reality through the perception-

consciousness system. In Ezekiel's case, the sensory system is exposed to the influence of Nigeria's period of opulence followed by a chronic recession. In the beginning, the psyche, regardless of its black super-ego, internalizes the white superego until the crisis, or more accurately until the Magistrate of Justice reveals its true face. However, in both cases, Ezekiel continues to drink and to alienate himself from his surroundings and land.

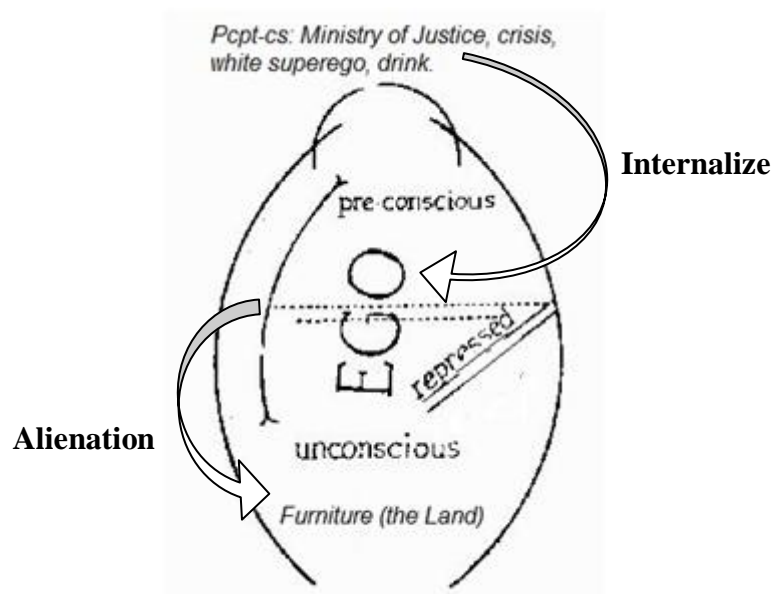


Figure (1): The Process of Repression

When Ezekiel is young, he tries to act like a white man. However, during his struggle to be a white man, he fails his law exam and loses his Volkswagen car in a car accident. Moreover, he tries to overcome his failure by the unhealthy use of drink in favor of selling his grandparents' furniture. Precisely, whenever the ego is sober, it represses the black superego which is represented in that case by furniture or the land. The repression is a defense mechanism against a neurotic anxiety resulted from the struggle between the Ego which tries to maintain the psychic balance and the impulses of the id which strives for drinking.

In the colonial situation where Nigerians witness daily life troubles, the unconscious tries to escape reality as a defense mechanism, Oma Ophir confirms, “*He[Freud] argues that psychosis is first and foremost an escape from reality*” (19). Escaping reality, in fact, is an act of unconscious alienation. In the story, however, Ezekiel escapes reality consciously. He internalizes the drink, and consciously loots his grandparents’ house. As a result, Ezekiel becomes freed from the struggle between the ego and the id. Otherwise, when Ezekiel is sober and faces the harsh reality, he suffers from a neurotic as well as a moral anxiety resulted from an act of ambivalence.

## **2.2. Ambivalence**

Nigerians cannot be ambivalent only in matters of culture, and Ezekiel cannot be ambivalent only in matters of family. In what follows, Blacky who is Ezekiel’s wife and Sarah who is his illegitimate daughter from an unknown mother, symbolize respectively Nigeria’s and Britain’s cultures.

### **2.2.1. Blacky**

While furniture and Ezekiel’s grandparents’ house symbolize the land, his relationships indicate culture. As a matter of course, in the beginning, Ezekiel has a legal relationship as he marries Black Ladi. In fact, Blacky exemplifies the black culture as her nickname connotes. Lamana’s aunties call her, in secret, Blacky alluding to her character. She has a bold personality which clearly appears when Ezekiel’s daughter from an unknown mother comes to her father’s house. As a reaction, Blacky intimidates Sarah, Ezekiel’s daughter, and Lamana feels sorry for his cousin, he expresses angrily: “*now I understood why my mother and her sisters called her ‘Blacky’*” (114). It is worth noting that Lamana’s anger

and point of view concerning Blacky is not necessarily true if it is put in the colonial context because the black culture has to be defended.

### **2.2.2. Sarah**

Sarah is the daughter of an illegal relationship because Ezekiel used to have many relationships as such when he was at university, Lamana illustrates: “...Sarah, my uncle’s other daughter. She had surfaced, suddenly, in the family circles six years ago from God-knows-where. She was a product of one of my uncle’s numerous peccadilloes when he was in the university” (112). The narrator, actually, resembles Sarah to someone who has “just arrived from a journey” (113). Which means Sarah does not genuinely belong to the area where Ezekiel lives. Moreover, her name is of a western origin. Thus, Sarah’s mother, unlike Blacky, symbolizes the white culture. In addition, Ezekiel’s illegitimate relationship refers to colonialism which settled in Britain without an invitation. In the end, colonialism proved to be the reason behind the cultural hybridity represented by Sarah.

### **2.2.3. Put Together: My Life Is Too Complicated**

Sarah makes blacky uncomfortable. As a result, Ladi blames Ezekiel for her presence. He, then, finds himself stuck in the middle. In those moments, Ezekiel cannot find better refuge than the drink. For example, when he fights with his wife and she leaves him alone, at that night he “got roaring drunk” (114). It was at that time when Lamana wonders about the behavior of his uncle who replies: “You won’t understand...it makes life bearable...my life is too complicated” (114).

The expression “*my life is too complicated*” (114). explains Fanon’s famous question: “*what does the black man want?*” (10). Fanon, in fact, does not ask that question until he remarks that the black man is in a situation of ambivalence because of which he cannot locate himself. In the same vein, Ezekiel is trapped and forced to choose between his wife and his daughter, Sarah. Lamana gives a deep account of the state that he finds his uncle in when he visits him, Lamana states: “*he[Ezekiel] looked like a caged bird looking for a way out...*” (113).

As it is already stated, alienation and, thus, ambivalence are the results of believing in the myth of the Negro which is tackled within the story. Since Blacky represents the black culture then she is the one who has to be repressed. In the context of the story, Blacky thinks that she owes Ezekiel an explanation after the unexpected advent of Sarah. However, all that Ezekiel could say is, “*Stop this embarrassment...*” (113). which entails the following: Blacky is supposed to symbolize the black superego that Ezekiel costs back into the id. As a result, Ezekiel is suffering from a moral anxiety because there is a conflict between the ego and the white superego. The matter goes as follows, Since Ezekiel feels intimidated and guilty of his wife’s behavior then he has already accepted the Myth of the Negro to the point of internalizing whites’ culture which makes him feel ashamed. At the end of the struggle, Blacky gives a way to an authentic alienation when she takes her two daughters and leaves Ezekiel’s house, she declares, “*In fact, this has made up my mind. I have had enough. I am moving out with my children*” (114). Verily, she fulfills her promise as soon as her children come back home. The repression, or Blacky’s leaving, is a kind of defense mechanism against the moral anxiety.

In the story, the binary opposition presence/ absence that ambivalence stresses is symbolized by the duality sober/ drunk and the appearance/disappearance of Blacky. On the

one hand, Ezekiel wants to absent himself from his reality by drinking because being sober leads him to another kind of ambivalence towards his wife, Lamana says, “*there was a hungry, trapped look in his eyes whenever he was sober...*” (114). On the other hand, before Blacky’s definite leaving, she is not always present in front of Ezekiel’s sight as a mark of ambivalence, the narrator explains Ezekiel’s uneasiness towards the situation Sarah puts him in, he says, “*His eyes turned fearfully to the curtained doorway into which Blacky had just disappeared, and then he turned to me, shaking his head in warning. He took my hand, ‘Come, we will go out. I will explain to you on the way ...’ his words were cut short by Blacky’s reappearance*” (113). The following scheme simplifies the situation:

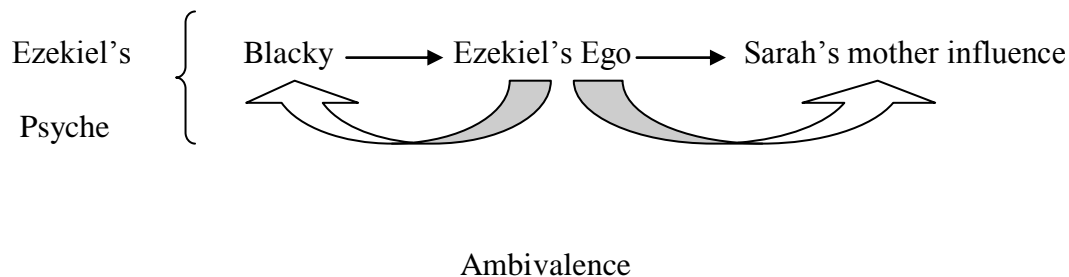


Figure (2): Ezekiel’s state of ambivalence

### 2.3. Assimilation: Was it all a joke?

The act of assimilation, in fact, is more distinguishable in the story other than alienation and ambivalence. However, the focus of this title is to tackle assimilation in its second stage. It is known that, at the beginning, Ezekiel behaves like a white man. As the story progresses, Ezekiel loses much of what makes him whiter like failing at university and missing out his Volkswagen car but he continues to drink. The drink drives him to repress his black superego by sacrificing his grandparents’ furniture and his inability to hold back Blacky from leaving, Lamana says: “*...my uncle’s feeble attempts to stop her were brushed aside angrily*” (114). Nevertheless, he stops drinking for a whole year when his sisters make a

serious meeting with him, Lamana illustrates: *“He quit drinking when my grandparents died...they[his sisters] got Uncle to promise to stop drinking. And he actually did”* (116). Unfortunately, when he becomes sober he discovers the blindness he put himself in like the tricks of priests because, for Ezekiel, it is impossible to find self-righteous men as such inside all of the current colonial problems which entails that religious people do not really understand blacks but just using them. Moreover, he becomes aware of the damage the drink has enrolled which is beyond repair. Lamana states, *“Perhaps, now that he was sober, he suddenly looked around and saw how much ground he had lost, and how impossible it was to recapture it”* (116). Unfortunately, Ezekiel’s drink suspension marks the beginning of the end.

Ezekiel predicts that his end is near since nothing around him looks the same as before. When he starts to be conscious of what he causes to himself he *“ did not laugh like he used to, he went about with a haunted, apprehensive look in his eyes, as if he was waiting for the day when everything would fall apart again”* (116). It was the same for Nigeria, it changed radically after colonialism. The bad news is that Nigerians were not even aware of that. Lamana believes that the only dead mistake that Ezekiel commits is the drink. In addition, it is the mistake of the whole Nigerian population at the moment of the colonial acceptance when they were fooled by religion. Lamana comments, *“I guess he felt, in a way, that it was his fate to be destroyed by alcohol; it was his tragic flaw, the trigger to his doom”* (116). After quitting the drink for a year, Ezekiel commits two deadly mistakes in a row. First he proves to be weak against his temptations when he is seduced by a bottle of gin. He thinks that he can control himself and drink only once which is his second mistake. In the same vein, Fanon assumes that the black man also cannot control himself to assimilate whites’ culture<sup>41</sup>. It is here where the ego collapses and marked, in the story, by the inability to stop drinking.

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<sup>41</sup>When Fanon says, *“...for the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white”* (*Black Skin, White Masks* 12).

For assimilation, there are two stages the first one is necessary conscious unlike the second one in which the black man unconsciously behaves like a white man even when he is alone. In the context of the story, that self-loss is the thing that kills Ezekiel and destroys his ego, the narrator illustrates, “*he went from party to party, buying people drink, downing drinks. He could not be controlled; it was as if some ravenous monster inside him was driving him on*” (117). Ezekiel’s psychic destruction can be represented as such:

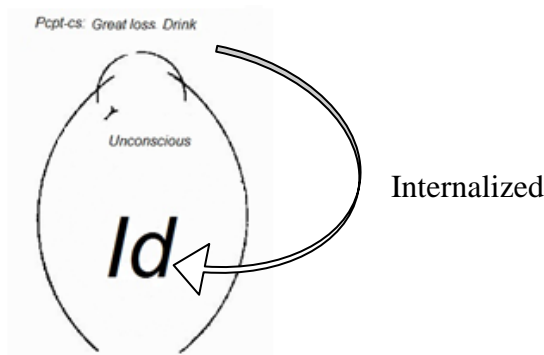


Figure (3): Mental Break-down

As it is shown in the figure, the only drive left for Ezekiel is the id impulses. The alcohol causes the dissolution of the ego and the superego as a manifestation of the psychic destruction. The figure (3), in fact, emphasizes Fanon’s assumption of “*turn white or disappear...*” (*Black Skin, White Masks* 100). Moreover, Fanon’s proposition of blacks’ single fate which is the white destiny is no more than a satire. Actually, it is impossible for blacks to completely assimilate the white culture due to the skin color obstacle. Precisely, blacks always pursue an image of identification but not reality. They can wear a white mask but can never be white. In the end, while blacks were perusing to assimilate whites’ culture, their pure culture has changed. Moreover, colonialism has changed Nigeria which is marked in the story by the death of Ezekiel, in parallel, Nigeria is never the same as before. Furthermore, blacks do not come to the later conclusion without being psychologically destroyed. That is why

assimilation is the first phase towards decolonization. Fanon's final stage is revolution after which Nigeria becomes hybridized. In the story, since Ezekiel dies who symbolizes Nigeria in its pure, old form, what remains is the existence of both the black culture which is symbolized by blacky and the hybridized culture after the departure of whites' culture which is symbolized by Sarah.

# General Conclusion

To check the fulfillment of the study's aim, I have first to restate what has already been stated in the introduction. The main intent of the research has been to analyse the psychology of Ezekiel from a Fanonian point of view to reflect on the situation of post-colonial Nigeria after the colonial influence. The analysis of the short story displayed how themes like alienation, ambivalence and assimilation are, in fact, the result of an oppressing colonialism which, as it shaped the colonial era, it also shaped the postcolonial era; the thing that is apparent through the psychology of Ezekiel. In the end, those psychological disorders, not the drink, were the cause of Ezekiel's mental breakdown just like colonialism, not religion, was the reason behind Nigeria's destruction.

The concept of legitimate trade fooled Africans that Europeans came to end slave trade on a human basis, and to bring civilization to the area. At the beginning, Britain used the indirect rule as a policy by making out of the local leaders British agents and by using Christian missionaries. However, things changed after the Berlin conference of 1881 which forced Britain to have a direct rule over the region. In a span of time of fifty years Britain then established the borders of what is known as Nigeria in 1914. Nigeria witnessed periods of opulence under the British colonialism. However, the crises that followed World Wars, the preparation for neo-colonialism plans and the nationalists' movements all participated in the independence of Nigeria. The post-colonial era witnessed instability in its first years due to problems related to ethnicity. However, the economical boom of 1970s calmed down the chaos caused by misgoverning. In the end the period of luxury did not last for a long time because of the dependence of Nigeria's economy on world fluctuations.

The state of society during and after colonialism required a psychological analysis which Fanon is known for. Actually, Fanon used Freud's psychoanalysis and clinical method, as a starting point, to present his approach. Fanon then came up with three related concepts

that black individuals experience under colonialism. The concepts of alienation, ambivalence and assimilation, respectively correspond to Freud's structure of the self, the id, ego and the superego. Fanon confirms that if one unit of the self's structure overwhelms the other, anxiety takes place and as a result, in the context of colonialism, one of Fanon's concepts manifests itself in a form of disorder.

The story *My Uncle Ezekiel* serves as a good example to detect the damage done to Nigeria by colonialism in the post-colonial era. Ezekiel and the circumstances surrounding him simulate to a large extent Nigerians and Nigeria during and after the British colonialism. As a result, studying the persona of Ezekiel helped in clarifying the psychology of the colonial discourse which made Nigeria never look the same as before.

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